

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to address the problems of the impending drug menace as highlighted in the report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Drug trafficking is a clandestine activity. The seizure of synthetic drugs in India, as reported by various drug law enforcement agencies, do not indicate an overall increasing trend. However, the smuggling of drugs into India from Myanmar although on a very small scale has registered a slight increase during the last three years.

(c) Government of India has already taken a number of significant steps to prevent and put effective check on drug trafficking. These include instructions to all drug enforcement agencies to maintain utmost vigil and step up enforcement efforts, training to officers, fencing of Indo-Pak border provided with flood lighting, vesting of powers in BSF and Coast Guards under the Customs Act, notifying certain precursor chemicals viz. Acetic Anhydride, Ephedrine etc. as 'Controlled Substances' under the NDPS Act, quarterly coordination meetings by NCB, signing of a bilateral agreement with Pakistan to hold periodic meetings at Secretary level and Director General level, holding of quarterly cross-border meetings of Indian and Pakistani anti-narcotics agencies as a part of the border meetings of BSF and Pak Rangers, signing of a bilateral agreement with Myanmar, holding of operational level meetings with Myanmar officials and providing two sniffer dogs to Myanmar and training dog handlers of Myanmar.

Improvement in the financial condition of IFCI

1796. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a meeting of major share holders of Industrial Finance Corporation of India was recently convened by Finance Secretary to discuss the way out for improving finance health of the IFCI; and

(b) if so, what measures were sorted out to improve the finance of the IFCI?

[7 August, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has decided to shore up Tier—I Capital of IFCI by subscribing Rs 400 crores to the 20 years convertible debentures to be issued by IFCI.

Restrictions on foreign visits of Ministers

1797. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH:

SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any restrictions have been imposed on foreign travel of Ministers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that even Ministers of State Government would also be required to seek approval of the Prime Minister for foreign visit;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action proposed to be taken to stop all foreign tours and utilize the services of embassies/High Commissions for all foreign work/negotiations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) The foreign travel of Central/State Government Minister is governed by instructions/guidelines issued by the Cabinet Secretariat O.M. No. 21 / 1 / 7 / 94-Cab dated 30-3-1995. All such proposals are processed in accordance with these instructions / guidelines and approved by the Prime Minister. The guidelines required that every proposal for a foreign visit is examined from the point of view of its functional justification. The need to adhere to these instructions has been emphasised time and again by the Government.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The extant guidelines require that a proposal has to be submitted by the State Government, after obtaining political clearance of Ministry of External Affairs and administrative clearance of the concerned Central Ministry. Department of Economic Affairs processes such proposals in terms of these guidelines and submits them to the Prime Minister for consideration and approval.